



The impact of resource depletion is being overshadowed by the threat of global warming

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Abstract:

The increased public and political focus on global warming has diverted discussion away from world resource depletion, particularly the depletion of fossil fuel energy with its potentially disastrous impact on world food production. According to its own internal whistleblowers, the International Energy Agency appears to have falsified information on world fossil fuel depletion-- on the grounds that telling the truth that world energy resources may already have peaked in production and are exceeded by demand, could cause skyrocketing oil prices and stampede the world into a new recession. Depletion of finite resources such as oil, gas, useable water or minerals is likely to impact on world GDP well before the worst impacts of global warming. The two together are likely to constrain world food production seriously, particularly in countries with high population densities or insufficient fertile lands. Food security in these countries is behind the huge "land and water grab" by foreign nationals that is now occurring across the developing world. Worldwide, governments have dealt with the recession by increasing consumption to prevent job losses which has increased demand for scarce resources, in order to return countries to growth (or business as normal). If peak oil has already arrived or is imminent, providing public funds to already damaged businesses that have large carbon footprints, is clearly irrational. Historically, global economic growth has never occurred without a simultaneous increase in the use of fossil fuel energy; GDP growth and world oil production growth have tracked each other for decades. It seems that while the IEA expects a steady increase in available oil, recent, more believable, evaluations of the decline in oil from the major giant oil fields that are already in the phase of depletion (e.g. Cantarell in Mexico and the North Sea province etc) suggests that Peak Oil arrived in 2008 and that by 2030 the production from fields currently on stream could have decreased by over 50 per cent (Hook 2009). The probable effect will be high prices flowing on into every walk of life, especially the cost of food with its huge embedded fossil fuel energy costs. This will inevitably increase financial instability and produce more recessions. Although global warming is probably the greatest problem humanity has ever faced the most immediate issue is the finite nature of fossil fuel that has supported the presently high standard of living (in industrialized countries). Without cheap oil there is no cheap food. There is no cheap water, health care, travel, housing or recreation. Without cheap energy the world contracts to using local resources and local activities. As food availability and diversity declines, it may lead to a decrease in the human population. This is contrary to the forecasted increase from 6.7 to over 8 billion people in the next 20 years. Human population increase is often considered the major problem that will impact on both resource depletion and global warming but consumerism by the wealthy is presently of major concern. The carbon footprint of multi millionaires can be up to ten thousand times that of the average person in industrialised countries, which in turn is 10 times that of the average person in developing countries and many of the 1 billion subsistence farmers in the world have almost insignificant use of fossil energy. There are around 10 million people world wide with assets greater than a million dollars and

therefore have disproportionate effect on world resource depletion and global warming. No politicians appear to be willing to address the problem of resource depletion and yet people are the end users and will be greatly affected as demand exceeds production for many resources, from rare earth metals through to energy and water. Politicians and business entrepreneurs appear to be willing to ignore the dangerous outlook for future generations, being only concerned with their present wealth, health and living standards and no politician wants to be the one telling their electorate that The free market economy and globalization must be severely constrained. Living standards or expectations of, in particular the rich, must be reduced-consume less, shop less, live in smaller homes, grow food locally, recreate locally and give up extravagant travel modes and also non essential travel and so on More and more people will have to cross the line from simply exercising brain power to make a living, to exercising imaginative and also efficient use of muscle power from animals and themselves to generate food. For the sake of peace and equity it will also be essential to lift the standard of living of the poor and mandate birth control in all countries if the floods of refugees that could occur through resource depletion and global warming, are to be prevented. Cuts in their use of fossil fuels should be forced first on the super rich who should pay a high price to pollute the global atmosphere at the cost of burning of fossil fuels (e.g. flying or owning private jets, large ocean cruisers, multiple cars and mansions and so on) However it is essential that everybody, above a minimum standard of living, must make some sacrifice. Few of us are going to do it voluntarily as it means giving up too much of our lifestyles for it to be effective in curbing greenhouse gases to a 'safe' level. The world needs time to adjust to even the first decade of the second half of the age of oil The objectives of governments should be to reduce fossil fuel exploitation and use it efficiently so as to maintain world reserves as high as possible to allow a slow reduction in populations and a narrowing of the resource use by rich and poor countries as society comes into equilibrium with resource availabilities. Traditional forms of economic growth will be impossible in a resource-depleted world. We need new forms of growth based upon intellect and human talent and skill rather than raw materials. Before any meaningful change of attitudes can take place, society has to understand that oil is truly finite - and is going to become very scarce sooner rather than later. Secondly the true cost of the conspicuous and wanton consumption of this fossil fuel energy must be identified and acknowledged and appropriate depletion strategies implemented. No longer should super rich people be able to excuse their extravagant life styles, by other compensatory actions such as planting trees, as their carbon emissions not only enhance global warming but will deteriorate the future standard of living of the populace in general, through resource depletion.

Source: <http://www.lrrd.org/lrrd22/2/leng.htm>

Resource Description

Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change;
surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

Public

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security

Food/Water Security: Food Access/Distribution

Geographic Feature: ☒

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location: ☒

resource focuses on specific location

Global or Unspecified

Health Impact: ☒

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

General Health Impact

Mitigation/Adaptation: ☒

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Mitigation

Other Projection Model/Methodology: Discussion only

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Population of Concern: ☒

populations at particular risk or vulnerability to climate change impacts

Low Socioeconomic Status

Resource Type: ☒

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion

Timescale: ☒

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified